OVERVIEW OF THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Mission and Role of the Bureau of Land Management

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) is the principal law guiding the management of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. The BLM is committed to safeguarding the ecological sustainability of the public lands under its care. By implementing management that conserves the diversity and protects the integrity of the land, the BLM will ensure that present and future generations continue to derive economic, recreational, social, cultural, and aesthetic benefits from public lands.

General Organizational Structure

BLM-California is organized along a "grass roots" structure, with 20 offices throughout the State near the public lands they administer. The backbone of this organizational structure are the 15 area offices, each led by an area manager and a staff of resource specialists. These resource areas are organized into 4 districts, which provide them administrative support and regional guidance. At the top level is the BLM California State Office, headed by State Director Ed Hastey.

The BLM in California employs 10 persons classified formally as botanists. In addition to these botanists, there are 4 personnel classified in other series (e.g., range conservationists, natural resource specialists) who work in floristics and rare plant conservation.

BLM-California is in the process of restructuring the staffs at the three levels of the organization. The goal is to put more people at the resource area level by reducing or eliminating duplicative functions at higher levels. Office locations are expected to stay the same.

Scope of Bureau of Land Management Responsibilities for Plant Conservation

The BLM manages nearly 17.2 million acres of public lands in California in almost every one of California's 58 counties. The plant communities managed by California-BLM are extremely diverse. A majority of the natural communities described in Holland's *Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Plant Communities of California* are represented on BLM lands in the State. On the public lands of the California Desert Conservation Area (a 25 million acre area in

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the Mojave and Colorado deserts of California, which includes 12.5 million acres of BLM lands), 2179 species, subspecies, and varieties of vascular plants have been catalogued.

BLM lands in California support the following numbers of special status plant species: Federal Endangered—12; Federal Threatened—4; Federal Proposed—12; Federal Candidate and CNPS List 1&2 Plants—168; totaling 196 species. In addition to the species that are known to occur on BLM lands, we suspect that another 137 species may occur on BLM lands. Further inventory is required to confirm or reject this.

Of those special status plants that occur on BLM lands, about 30 species are restricted or nearly restricted to BLM lands, and another 40 species have half or more of their total distribution on BLM lands. Some of the more important BLM occurrences, however, are of species that occupy mostly private lands; because of development of the private lands, the BLM lands offer some of the only remaining refuges for these species.

Highlights of Current Conservation Activities

Inventory. Inventory remains a critical need for the BLM in California. Considerable effort is being directed to the San Joaquin Valley because of the many listed and candidate plant species in the area and the need for information to guide ecosystem management in the Valley. Three species-directed inventories have been completed by Russ Lewis of the Caliente Resource Area in Bakersfield. These, in combination with work done by other Bakersfield District botanical staff, have documented 377 new occurrences of *Antirrhinum ovatum,* 627 new occurrences of *Eriastrum hooveri,* and 535 new occurrences of *Lembertia congdonii.* Also in the San Joaquin Valley, the number of known occurrences of *Caulanthus californicus* has been increased by 17.

The Bishop Resource Area has been conducting rare plant surveys in several areas, including the Bodie Hills Management Area (2200 acres), the Inyo Mountains Area of Critical Environmental Concern (1000 acres), and Slinkard Valley (300 acres). In addition to discovering new occurrences of several special status plants, preliminary plant lists have been compiled and voucher collections made.

Our California Desert District has documented new occurrences of many rare plant species, including *Penstemon calcareous* (10 new occurrences) and *Maurandya antirrhiniflora* ssp. *antirrhiniflora* (8 new occurrences), found as a result of a cooperative survey involving the California Native Plant Society.

Both the Ukiah and Susanville districts have been involved in inventory efforts that have resulted in the discovery of several new occurrences of special status plants.

Monitoring. Most monitoring by BLM personnel in California consists of returning to known sites, observing any threats, filling out California Natural Diversity Data Base Field Survey Forms, and possibly estimating the number of individuals using a logarithmic scale (1–10, 10–100, 100–1000, etc.). Several quantitative monitoring studies are conducted regularly, including the following.

Long-term monitoring of rare plant taxa, including the endangered *Arabis mcdonaldiana,* on Red Mountain, Mendocino County, has been conducted by Dr. Michael Baad through a cooperative agreement with BLM.

Monitoring of *Camissonia benitensis* in San Benito County has taken place for many years, both by BLM personnel and by contract with BioSystems Analysis.

Two rare plants, *Chlorogalum grandiflorum* and *Lomatium congdonii,* found in the Red Hills, Tuolumne County, have been monitored, both inside and outside grazed areas, since 1984.

Restoration. Several efforts are being made to restore native plant habitat. BLM is cooperating with The Nature Conservancy to eradicate alien plants in the Samoa and Manila dunes of Humboldt County and restore habitat of *Erysimum menziesii* and *Layia carnosa.* A total of $45,000 will be committed this fiscal year to this effort.

Considerable work is being done to remove introduced species of the genus *Tamarix* from riparian areas and oases in the Mojave and Colorado deserts. This year's efforts are concentrated on Afton Canyon and Dos Palmas.

The Susanville District is developing a native plant restoration program, promoting reclamation with local native species. The District is in the process of establishing its own native grass seed source (using locally collected seeds) in association with the necessary reclamation of a proposed buried pipeline.

Studies. BLM is supporting demographic studies being conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of three listed San Joaquin Valley plant species. Grazing impacts on these species are also being investigated.

Education. BLM conducts numerous field trips and natural history talks, both in the field and in schools and communities. Interpretive signs and kiosks also help spread the word about the importance of conserving the rich floristic heritage of California's public lands.

Adequacy of Knowledge of Special Status Plants

Despite considerable effort in inventorying and monitoring its special status plants, California-BLM is a long way from realizing its goal of complete knowledge of the distribution and status of the

special status plants on BLM lands. The scattered nature of the public lands to the west of the Sierra Nevada and north of the Tehachapi Mountains makes inventory extremely difficult.

In 1991 BLM-California estimated that only 11 percent of its public lands had been adequately inventoried for special status plants, that only 6 percent of its special status plants were being monitored, and that only 4 of 65 needed studies had been completed. The situation is only slightly better today.

Greater effort will be required to more thoroughly understand the rare flora of the public lands in California. The BLM, together with all those interested in the conservation of special status plants, must try even harder to gather the information required to develop ecosystem management plans that truly conserve the State's rare plants and natural plant communities.

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OVERVIEW OF THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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MISSION AND ROLE OF THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

The mission of the Fish and Wildlife Service is to conserve, protect, and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Fish and Wildlife Service has regulatory authority and enforcement responsibility: Endangered Species Act administration; migratory birds (Migratory Bird Treaty Act); certain marine mammals (Marine Mammal Protection Act); National Wildlife Refuges (National Wildlife Refuge Systems Administration Act of 1966); interstate and international fishery resources; fish and wildlife grant program administration (Wetlands Reserve Program, Section 6 Endangered Species Act); mapping wetlands of the U.S. and providing wetland information for planning purposes (National Wetlands Inventory); enforcement of Endangered Species Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act; inspection of imports to protect fish, wildlife, and plants.

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